

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 538

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to commend Ray and Jan Saunders for their honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Ray and Jan Saunders are two such estimable people who are featured in an inspiring, warm, and humorous biography entitled *Of Course I Can! The Vision and Dreams of Ray Saunders*; and

WHEREAS, recently released by WinePress Publishing, this magnificent account was pinned by Mrs. Saunders and chronicles the struggles and triumphs of her beloved husband; and

WHEREAS, the son of Lucy and George Saunders, Ray Saunders was born in December of 1931 and begin dealing with numerous health challenges as an infant; and

WHEREAS, faced with dyslexia as well as albinism, a rare genetic disorder characterized by a lack of pigmentation in the eyes, hair, and skin, Mr. Saunders struggled to keep up with his school work and soon fell behind in his studies; and

WHEREAS, when his parents transferred him to the Tennessee School for the Blind, Ray Saunders' true indomitable spirit began to emerge as he learned to read, write, and spell in Braille, play the clarinet and piano, and develop the confident leadership skills he would use throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, possessing an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, this assiduous scholar graduated from Tennessee Technological University, earned his Master's degree from Vanderhook College of Music in Chicago, and eventually completed a doctorate; and

WHEREAS, on June 10, 1958, Ray and Jan Saunders were joined in holy matrimony, and since that fateful day this outstanding couple has faced the world as one, basking in the glow of their love for each other during both life's joys and sorrows; and

WHEREAS, an extremely talented and compassionate educator, Mr. Saunders began his illustrious teaching career in Brownsville at Haywood County High, but both he and his wife devoted most of their careers to providing the highest quality education for Tennessee's students in the Sunbright community; and

WHEREAS, Ray Saunders was born again at the age of thirty-one and has always sought new ways to provide hope and communicate God's love to his community and around the world ever since; and

WHEREAS, hearing the divine call to the ministry, Mr. and Mrs. Saunders sought appointment as missionaries through the Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1964 but were denied because of the unique issues created by Ray Saunders's medical condition; and

WHEREAS, displaying the unrelenting spirit that is characteristic of a true Tennessean, Mr. Saunders decided to turn a heartbreaking tragedy into triumph and founded the Caribbean College of the Bible, training dozens of pastors to spread the Word in Belize, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, St. Thomas, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; and

WHEREAS, the Saunders's remarkable success as community leaders is directly attributable to their reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and their uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Ray and Jan Saunders are extremely giving people who often reach out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and they epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, their many accomplishments aside, Mr. and Mrs. Saunders are most grateful for the love and support they share with each other; and

WHEREAS, Ray and Jan Saunders are wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and they should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Ray and Jan Saunders for their honorable and astute to the good people of Tennessee, applaud their publishing of *Of Course I Can! The Vision and Dreams of Ray Saunders*, and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.